

Character Not Charisma is the Critical Measure of Leadership Excellence

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The leadership crisis in ethics in many organizations partially stems from the crisis in character of our leaders. The character of the leader is grounded on such core values as integrity, trust, truth and human dignity, which influence the leader's vision, ethics and behaviour. The moral literacy of the leader and the essentials of an ethical culture are connected to his/her character and not to his/her charismatic personality. The quest for leadership excellence is based more on character than charisma. The leader is also empowered through his/her character to serve as a mentor.

But I've always maintained that what made us different, what inculcated values in the organization, was not the technology employed, and that's, I think, a mistake many of my Colleagues and many of my fellow CEOs, and even perhaps some in academia make. There is far too much focus on technology. I would submit to you that in the context of leadership that is value-based, a leader has to be 95 percent psychologist and perhaps five percent technologist. If you don't understand what it is that makes people tick, and you try to force decisions on colleagues, they're not going to follow, and they're not going to internalize values. The whole essence of inculcating values and the whole essence of leadership is making sure the people are truly following you.

-H.A. Tyabji (2000) Executive of the Year
(Academy of Management Executive)

The main objective of this article is to stress the importance of character as a critical variable in the study of leadership. A subordinate objective is to focus on the ambiguous construct, charisma, that is current in leadership research, and to show that it is not connected to the quest for leadership excellence. Charisma is not connected to ethics, moral literacy, mentoring or the design of an ethical culture for the organization by the leader. It is the character of the leader that is connected to these elements of a leader's behaviour. The article is organized around a number of focal perspectives, which emphasize these elements of a leader's character, and a conceptual framework, which integrates these elements of character.

Leadership, variously and however defined, has been well researched. On the contrary, it has, especially since the end of the last world war, become the object of intensive and extensive scrutiny. But a curious thing has happened along the way. There has developed a tendency to concentrate the study under the rubric of psychology so there has come about a certain specialization and monopolization: what we might call the psychologizing of leadership. What began in antiquity as a profoundly philosophical concern—how to find the guardian—has become demythologized, secularized, empiricized, democratized, and psychologized, and now flourishes as a thickly tangled web where notions of values, ethics, and morality have been leached away, ignored, or depreciated as irrelevant (Hodgkinson, 1993).

The underlying value system of an organization cannot be managed in the traditional way. Issuing an authoritative directive, for example, has little or no impact on

an organization's value system. Organizational values are developed and reinforced primarily through value based leadership, a relationship between a leader and followers that is based on shared, strongly internalized values that are advocated and acted upon by the leader. Leaders influence cultural and ethical values by clearly articulating a vision for organizational values that employees can believe in, communicating the vision throughout the organization, and institutionalizing the vision through everyday behaviour, rituals, ceremonies, and symbols, as well as through organizational systems and policies (Daft, 2002).

Charisma vs. Character

Charisma focuses on personality attributes such as dynamism, style, image, inspiration, symbolic behaviours (House, 1977) impression management, emotional intelligence (Coleman, 1998), extroverted style, self-confidence, empathetic understanding, and admiration for articulating a vision (Shamir, 1995). CEO charisma represents a potentially key component of strategic leadership (Bass, 1990; Hunt, 1991). However, an alternative conceptualization is that charismatic leadership may occasionally be more personalized in nature where the leader is self serving, self-aggrandizing, and exploitative of others (Kets de Vries, 1993; Klein and House, 1998) displaying high levels of Machiavellianism (i.e. maximizing one's self interest at the expense of others through the use of manipulation and deceit) narcissism and authoritarianism causing loss of self initiative and self control of their followers.

Leaders whose personalities are characterized by a high degree of narcissism are driven by intense needs for power and prestige. The use of coercive power, intimidation, and deception are some of the strategies used to enhance the power visibility of these charismatic leaders. Kets de Vries (1989) also focus on leaders who "self destruct". He suggests that the leadership position can be associated with loneliness and disconnectedness that often result in self-defeating behaviours. Conger et al (1989) observe "charisma" is a Greek word meaning "gift of grace." Its earliest use can be traced to the Bible, in which St. Paul employs the term in two letters (Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12).

He enumerates such things as wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, healing, and the ability to understand and express oneself in different languages as gifts (charisma) endowed by the Holy Spirit on particular people. Subsequently, in the Christian faith the term came to be ascribed to the various roles played by the members in their particular roles. For a long time, "charisma" remained a term exclusive to the Christian religion and its ecumenical practices.

In the *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1947), Max Weber wrote:

The term charisma will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with *supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin* or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.

Nur (1998) reviews definitions of charisma that neutralize the divine connection attributed by Max Weber to this concept. House et al (1991) attribute three characteristics to charismatic leadership: (1) extremely high levels of self-confidence, (2) dominance, and (3) a strong conviction in the moral righteousness of their beliefs. House, Spangler, and Woycke (1991) define charisma as "the ability a leader to exercise diffuse and intense influence over the beliefs, values, behavior, and performance of others through his or her own behaviour, beliefs, and personal example." They see charisma as a "relationship or bond between a leader and subordinates"—an attribution assigned by the followers coupled with personality trait intrinsic to the leader. Moreover, a follower's belief in the charismatic's divine link is watered down to "inspirational powers." Note that in this instance, "inspirational powers" has no divine connotations. Inspiration defined as the extent to which a leader stimulate enthusiasm among subordinates for the work of the group and says things to build their confidence in their ability to successfully perform assignments and attain group objectives.

As seen by most researchers, charisma is not a concept that is feasible in today's modern

workplace. Whatever differences they may have with respect to their views, these scholars agree that one of the essential aspects of charisma is a belief in its supernatural source. But such a belief on the part of followers is nonexistent in the organizational setting. Moreover, the kind of crisis necessary to catalyze the emergence of a charismatic is a major crisis at the societal level. It takes a life-and-death situation to ignite dormant charisma, if there is room for such a thing in today's modern skeptical mind.

Charisma draws its motivational power from the followers' adoption of the transcendent mission of the leader and their belief in the divine source of this transcendence. When charisma is secularized, as the analyses of House, Bass and others effectively do, neither feature is preserved. This puts a big question mark on the motivational value of such watered-down charisma. Without a belief in a transcendent mission and divine calling, charismatic leadership is not much more than another leadership style or personality strait. Divorced of its divine connotations, it becomes little more than charm or an aura. There is no difference between it and the popular meaning people attach to it in everyday use of the term.

If charismatic leadership in business is a concept that is distinct from Weber's, what is it? Researchers cannot attribute the concept to Weber while completely ignoring its transcendental dimension. It is high time to come up with a rigorous definition of whatever we mean by "charisma" or drop it altogether.

The Dark Side of Charisma

Perspective

The dark side of charisma is essentially a crisis in character or character flaws of the charismatic leader, which neutralize his/her core value of integrity and his search for excellence.

Conger and Kanungo (1998) while developing a theory of charismatic leadership in organizations are compelled to focus on the dark side of charisma which they categorize as character flaws which reinforce my argument that it is character which is the major determinant of leadership excellence.

More importantly and somewhat more rarely, dramatic problems can arise because of certain character flaws. Charismatic leaders can

be prone to extreme narcissism that leads them to promote highly self-serving and grandiose aims. As a result, the leader's behaviors can become exaggerated, lose touch with reality, or become vehicles for pure personal gain. In turn, they may harm the leader, followers, and the organization. An overpowering sense of self-importance and strong need to be at the center of attention can lead charismatic leaders to ignore the viewpoints of others and the development of leadership ability in followers. We might even classify charismatic leaders as positive or negative by their orientation toward satisfying their own needs versus those of their followers. For example, negative charismatic leaders presumably emphasize a devotion to themselves over their mission. They also are likely to promote personal identification and dependence on themselves over a more straightforward endorsement and internalization of the values and ideological goals they are promoting. Positive charismatic leaders, on the other hand, are more likely to emphasize the mission rather than themselves and to seek internalization over personal identification.

House et al (1991) have gone so far as to speculate that there is a unique set of personality characteristics and behaviors that distinguish these positive and negative forms of charismatic leadership—or as they term them, *socialized* and *personalized* charisma. Their theory holds that although the *socialized* charismatic leader has a high need for power, it is counterbalanced with high activity inhibition, low authoritarianism, an internal locus of control, high self-esteem, and low Machiavellianism. These "balancing" characteristics shape the socialized leader's behavior such that it emphasizes the collective interests of followers. The leader's tendency is to govern others through more egalitarian means, to work through established channels of authority, to address followers' needs, and to approach motivation through empowerment. In contrast, the *personalized* leader has a high need for power that is instead coupled with low activity inhibition, high authoritarianism, an external locus of control, low self-esteem, high narcissism, and high Machiavellianism.

These characteristics promote leadership behavior that is largely self-serving. Such leaders govern in a totalitarian manner,

discourage questioning of their decisions, advocate goals that largely benefit themselves, disregard legitimate institutional channels, and use punishments and rewards to motivate. Among their followers, they prefer to foster dependence and unquestioning obedience over independent thinking.

How can we judge the two charismatic leadership forms to be ethical or unethical? To address this question, we must first specify what we mean by the term *ethical*. The term means that which is morally good, or that which is considered morally right—as opposed to that which is legally or procedurally right. According to Thomas Aquinas, the moral goodness of behaviors should be judged on the basis of the objective *act itself*, the subjective *motive of the actor*, and the *context* in which the act is performed. The ethical nature of charismatic leadership in organizational contexts manifests itself on three dimensions: the leader's *motives*; the leader's *influence strategies*; and the leader's *character formation*. Charismatic leaders exhibit ethical leadership when they (1) strive to operate with an altruistic intent, (2) utilize empowering rather than controlling strategies to influence followers, and (3) endeavor to cultivate virtues and abstain from vices to build their own character. A virtuous character is the building block of leadership excellence.

The Character of the Leader

On the other hand, character is based on core values of the leader. Character is the leader's moral center (Sai Baba, 2001). Character influences his/her vision, goals, self-concept, strategies, work ethic, attitude, perception, code of ethics, behaviour, and the search for excellence (Sankar, 1997). Character, therefore, is an evaluation of personality. The subject matter of ethics is character (Fromm, 1985). A leader can have a charismatic personality but a debased character. He/she is charming, inspirational, dynamic, magnetic, and glamorous but his/her core values are based on greed, egoism, and power abuse. From the core values emanate sub values, which express a leader's dysfunctional behaviours such as malice, deception, arrogance, intimidation, conceit, coercion, anger and an absence of trust, integrity, gratitude, and harmony. These toxic

values will in turn influence his vision, strategies for using power, communicating, and decision making and will prove dysfunctional for all levels of the organization.

Becker (1998) grounds character of the leader on integrity "Good character" means, at least in part, that the individual has integrity. This is directly related to performance on the job. Holding ability constant, people with higher integrity are more innovative and productive than those with lower integrity. This is because a person of integrity knows that innovation and productivity are central to life's purpose and, therefore, are in his or her rational best interests. Further, without integrity, ability and motivation are useless because the individual would use his or her skills and drive to deceive and evade rather than perform and produce, which would undermine the long-term effectiveness of both the employee and the organization.

Integrity and Character

The word integrity is derived from the Latin word *integri*, meaning wholeness. It is defined as a "state of being whole or undiminished." It is also defined as a state of "soundness of and adherence to moral principle." Since integrity is an aspect of one's character and behaviour, the definitions are highly related. It has been argued that a leader's character cannot become whole and integrated unless it is grounded in a solid infrastructure of moral values.

Zauderer (2000) identifies specific behaviours of a leader associated with integrity as a superordinate value on which character is rooted.

How does one's integrity affect the trust of others and the strength of the commonweal? In attempting to identify specific behaviors, a far-reaching search of literature that included religion, philosophy, biographies of great leaders, psychology, and business and government ethics was conducted. Cross-cutting moral themes and principles were identified and are described in the following list: (The behaviors are expressed in a negative form—the opposite behavior follows in *italics*). A leader's integrity is compromised when he or she:

Displays Arrogance by becoming puffed up with their own importance, exaggerating their

worth to the organization, and speaking only with people at same or higher level. (*Possess humility*)

Promotes Self-interest by exploiting the organization for own purpose and focusing on "what's in it for me" when considering actions. (*Maintain concern for the greater good*)

Practices Deception by making untrue statements, taking credit for the work of others, and using misleading facts to defend positions. (*Be truthful*)

Breaches Agreements by delivering services late, or failing to follow an agreed upon decision process. (*Fulfill commitments*)

Deals Unfairly by making judgments without researching facts, discriminating in hiring and promotion, and assigning the most interesting projects to a favored few. (*Strive for fairness*)

Shifts Blame by declining to acknowledge personal responsibility, falsely accusing others, and denigrating the reputation of colleagues. (*Take responsibility*)

Diminishes Dignity by withholding recognition, declining to invite or accept input, exhibiting discourteous and impolite behavior. (*Have respect for the individual*)

Retains Envy by begrudging others success, and Competing at every opportunity. (*Celebrate the good fortune of others*)

Neglects Employee Development by Providing superficial Performance appraisals and failing to coach or train staff. (*Develop others*)

Avoids Risks by refusing to confront unjust actions, or declining to stand up for principle. (*Reproach unjust acts*)

Holds Grudges by failing to let go of hard feelings, and finding ways to get even. (*Be forgiving*)

Declines to Extend Self by withholding help and assistance in times that matter, and being ungenerous in rewards. (*Extend self for others*)

Integrity as a Governing Ethic

A strategy based on integrity holds organizations to a more robust standard. While compliance is rooted in avoiding legal sanctions, organizational integrity is based on the concept of self-governance in accordance with a set of

guiding principles (Paine, 2000). From the perspective of integrity, the task of ethics management is to define and give life to an organization's guiding values, to create an environment that supports ethically sound behavior, and to instill a sense of shared accountability among employees. The need to obey the law is viewed as a positive aspect of organizational life, rather than an unwelcome constraint imposed by external authorities.

An integrity strategy is characterized by a conception of ethics as a driving force of an enterprise and the leader. Ethical values shape the search for opportunities, the design of organizational systems, and the decision-making process used by individuals and groups. They provide a common frame of reference and serve as a unifying force across different functions, lines of business, and employee groups. Organizational ethics helps define what a company is and what it stands for.

Kets de Vries (1994) connects some sub-values of integrity as building blocks of a leader's character. Looking at the current literature on leadership traits we find that although the quantity of this literature is overwhelming and often confusing, there is a certain amount of commonality among the findings. Among the traits that have been discerned regularly among effective leaders (confirmed by my own observations are conscientiousness (which includes dependability, achievement orientation and perseverance), extroversion, dominance, self-confidence, energy, agreeableness (meaning flexibility and sense of trust), intelligence, openness to experience (including a lack of ethnocentrism), and emotional stability. A closer look at many of these traits, however, makes it clear that each of them can be the subject of a heated polemic about its true meaning and its applicability to specific character types. In addition, particularly in the clinical literature, labels such as agreeableness and emotional stability may open an enormous can of worms. It can be argued that leaders will be more or less effective depending on the specific combination of these traits. To understand these building blocks of character, we have to go to the roots of leaders' developmental histories

Perspective

The character of the leader is more important than charisma in influencing his/her vision, goals, strategies, core values, choices, judgment and behaviour and in the transformation of basic elements of his personality.

The current ethical - moral crisis in many occupations, business, law, medicine, politics, and education can be partially attributed to the absence of moral leadership in these occupations. The crisis is a crisis of character. Many charismatic leaders suffer from basic flaws in their character and these impact on their vision, goals, strategies, judgment, choices, ground rules and behaviour. The character of the leader is the building block or root system of his/her personality and of leadership excellence. Excellence unlike efficiency and effectiveness is a value based construct, it is the ethical ground rules of the leader that guide his vision, style, commitment, and the design of the corporate culture. Character is the missing critical variable in leadership research. The subject matter of ethics is not charisma but character. Character leads to the performance of one's duty. Duty is a moral obligation to perform an action generally in the service of the community; the moral calculus for a leader's ethical judgment, choices and behaviour is derived from his character not his charisma. The moral compass to guide the organization in a volatile environment and a global playing field is also based on her character (Bennis et al., 1995): "If the values are right such factors as style, personality, vision will fall in line". The moral character of a leader makes him a VIP (virtuous integrated personality) (Sai Baba, 2001). It is more logical to focus on Type A or Type B personality of a leader, his locus of control, his growth need strength, his power motive and moral commitment than to focus on charisma in predicting leadership excellence. For example, a leader with a virtuous character will have an internal locus of control (Quick and Quick, 1985) versus an external locus of control, high growth need strength (Yukl, 1989) positive sum assumption of power versus zero sum assumption of power, (Bennis et al., 1995), moral commitment versus moral ambivalence to core value (MacGregor Burns, 1978), and a productive orientation in his personality versus a hoarding orientation (Fromm, 1985). The

leader's portfolio of core values is more important than knowledge, techniques, expertise, information and charisma.

Mentoring and Character

The leader can be a mentor or role model because of his/her character not his charisma. Mentoring is a value-based concept. The leader's credibility as a mentor is enhanced by her core values, ethical vision, moral commitment and her conception of her duty to organizational members. For example, trust is a core value in mentoring. Trust comes from character, not charisma.

Trust is "a state involving confident positive expectations about another's motives with respect to one's self in situations entailing risk" (Boon & Holmes, 1991: 194) and, thus, is an orientation toward others that is beyond rationality (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Tyler & Kramer, 1996) because it increases one's vulnerability to opportunistic behaviour (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996; Zand, 1972). In the same vein, McAllister explains trust as "the extent to which a person is confident in, and willing to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another" (1995: 25), and he empirically identifies cognitive- and affect-based trust as separate constructs. This combination of views and findings provides us with a definition of trust between individuals (i.e. interpersonal trust, and followers (Jeffries and Reed, 2000).

A leader's behaviour speak louder than his personality. Behaviour is a function of values. To change problematic behaviours, such as mistrust, malice, manipulation, deceit etc., one changes such values as egoism, power obsessions, and greed. One practices one's moral calculus or virtues in the search for effective mentoring.

Perspective

The leader is empowered to serve as a mentor by virtue of his/her character. Mentoring like character is value based. Character acts as a moral compass for guiding others along the ethical path.

Virtue based ethics is the moral guidance system for changing the negative elements of one's character (MacIntyre, 1985). Character is grounded on virtues such as love, integrity, duty,

It has been common for some time now for both scholars and practitioners to espouse goals related to greater empowerment, employee involvement, and pluralism. Yet, in spite of this rhetoric, there seems to be compelling anecdotal evidence (Argyris, 1977; Moskal, 1991; Redding, 1985; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991) that it is common for employees to think that speaking up is useless and even dangerous—beliefs that are clearly at odds with notions of empowerment, involvement, and pluralism. In this article we have tried to shed some light on this paradox. We have tried to explain why, despite "knowing" that they should encourage upward communication, organizations' dominant tendency may be just the opposite—namely, to create a climate of silence. (Morrison and Milliken, 2000)

Moral Literacy and Character

The moral intelligence, insight and imagination of a leader are connected to his character not charisma. What the CEO needs today in the business world is not more information but transformation, transformation of his vision, goals, intelligence, core values and behaviour. One ton of information may contain zero insight. The transformational leader is one who couples information with insight and ideals. Moral literacy is as important as computer literacy to a leader's effectiveness. Moral literacy consists of the basics of ethics, ethical principles, rules of conduct, conceptions of right and wrong, moral intelligence, imagination and moral commitment to our moral heritage and ground rules for decision-making. Moral literacy is connected to character, not to charisma. It is from moral literacy that a leader can articulate the core values that drive his or her vision and the ABC of ethics namely, the essentials of an ethical culture of his or her organization. It is in the decision making process, the essence of management, that a leader's moral vision, values, and imagination are tested in volatile environment.

Perspective

Moral literacy is the ABC of ethics, the essential principles and ground rules of ethics. It provides the leader with a common set of ground rules to guide his/her judgment on sensitive and strategic ethical issues facing the organization.

The ground rules for decision making come from character not charisma. Such ground rules will counteract the dark side of charisma, namely, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Vedanta). Obey your conscience as a general ethical rule; never use a person as a means to an end; act so that your action can be universal maxim; visualize the consequences of your action on all constituents, do the right thing, use your moral judgment and reason as a guidance system; good actions produce good results, action produce reactions - monitor the ripple effects of your action.

Modern leaders are in search of integrity, a core value from which ethical ground rules are derived. Charisma is helpful only if a leader couples character with integrity and with the ideal of service to his organization or community. Organizational members first see his integrity, integrity in what he thinks, says and does - harmony in his thought, word, and action. A character based on integrity persists over time and situations because of consistency in the leader's behaviour (Badarraco et al., 1989) but charisma fades with time, like image, style, and dynamism because the leader lacks integrity. From integrity in his character the leader has a vision of the truth. Truth when joined with love brings moral radiance into the leader's character (Sai Baba, 2001). Leadership is idealism in action. Integrity starts at the top of the organization with the CEO and cascades down the chain of command, the corporate culture, communications networks and the corporate ethos.

A virtuous character of the leader will facilitate the following productive behaviours and elements of charismatic personality.

Table 2: Character, Change and Excellence

-Moral vision and moral commitment at work	- Self transformation
- Just exercise of power	-Theory Y leadership style
-Vibrant work ethic	-Effective mentoring behaviour
-Internal locus of control	-Positive-sum assumption of power
-Idealized self image	-Atmic vision or self transcendence
-Effective ground rules for decision making	-Creative stress coping strategies
-Empathetic understanding	-Mindfulness (insight and awareness)
-Goal oriented behaviour	-Problem centered vs. self-centered focus
-A climate of trust	-Moral compass to guide the organization
-Value based management	-Transformation of personality

Perspective

Leadership excellence is contingent on (1) the leader's character, (2) his/her code of ethics, (3) the ethical ground rules he uses in decision making, (4) and the core values he/she uses to design the culture of the organization.

Leadership and Ethical Culture

Leadership is crucial to the organization's ethical culture, as integrity (or the lack of it) flows from the top down. According to a report from the Business Roundtable, a group of senior executives from major American corporations, leadership is crucial to organizational ethics. "To achieve results, the Chief Executive Officer and those around the CEO need to be openly and strongly committed to ethical conduct, and give constant leadership in tending and renewing the values of the organization." In surveys of practicing managers, honesty and competence emerge as the most important qualities identified as essential to good leadership (Daft, 2002).

The report issued by the Business Roundtable – also - discussed ethics, policy, and practice in one hundred member companies, including GTE, Xerox, Johnson & Johnson, Boeing, and Hewlett-Packard. In the experience of the surveyed companies, the single most important factor in ethical decision-making was

the role of top management in providing commitment, leadership, and example for ethical values. The CEO and other top managers must be committed to specific values and must give constant leadership in tending and renewing those values. Values can be communicated in a number of ways - speeches, company publications, policy statements, and especially, personal actions. Top leaders are responsible for creating and sustaining a culture that emphasizes the importance of ethical behaviour for all employees every day. When the CEO engages in unethical practices or fails to take firm and decisive action in response to the unethical practices of others, this attitude filters down through the organization. Formal ethics codes and training programs are worthless if leaders do not set and live up to high standards of ethical values based on their character.

Contributions and Future Research

This article contributes to our understanding of leadership excellence by providing a more comprehensive focus on two variables, namely, character and charisma, than previous research. We have stressed character as an additional construct and have connected it to integrity as a governing ethic, core values, moral literacy and mentoring, and the design of an ethical culture by the leader. We have depicted character in a more luminous fashion through our conceptual framework and a checklist of twenty types of behaviours associated with a virtuous character of the leader.

Another contribution of this article is the integration of ethics, personality and mentoring literatures. We show that ideas generated in each of these fields are interrelated and crucial to the development of our focal perspectives.

Finally, the greatest contribution of our research may well be the generation of future research. Through this article we intend to stimulate inquiry and a broader understanding of the conceptual variables of leadership excellence and ethics.

In future research, an attempt should be made to further define the elements of the key construct, namely, character in terms of core values. The next step will be to connect these core values to a leader's vision, ethical strategies, use of power, ground rules for decision-making, motivation, and the design of corporate culture. We think we have assisted future researchers by offering some focal perspectives that link three critical components of leader behaviour, namely, integrity, moral literacy and mentoring.

Clearly, we believe that those interested in leadership research should begin by testing these perspectives we have proposed. To do this, they must connect these perspectives into propositions that focus on the key construct, character as it manifests itself in a leader's behaviour. Although we have provided a graphical representation of the model on character, the causality in the various elements of the model is not well defined. At this point, our model focuses on a global structuring of the relationships between many of the variables, but does not account for any unique variance of specific elemental constructs within the overall

leadership excellence process. We recognize that leadership excellence is a multi-dimensional construct as well as value based construct.

Conclusion

The leader plays a critical role in the propagation of an ethical culture within his/her organization. In view of the ethical-moral crisis in many occupations it can be deduced that this crisis is indicative of the absence of moral leadership in these organizations. Too often, the emphasis has been placed on the expertise, power, charisma, information, personality traits, strategic vision, and organizational characteristics in leadership research at the expense of the leader's moral character. The leader's character is a strategic source of power for infusing the culture of his/her organization with a code of ethics, moral vision, imagination, and courage. Leadership excellence cannot be evaluated without an assessment of the leader's character.

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